



Chambers's Journal

SIXTH SERIES.

BONAMY'S ADVENTURE.

By MRS HAMILTON SYNGE.

CHAPTER I.

IHAD run down to spend Friday till Monday with my cousin Cissy Domithorne at her pretty home in Hampshire. I particularly enjoyed my little visits to Cissy.

If there was one house where the especial weaknesses of man-nature were understood, it was at The Grange. The claret was Château Lafitte, and was warmed to the exact temperature. The house was old, interesting, and comfortable. The cooking was without blame.

Cissy was a widow, with a handsome income, pretty fluffy hair, blue eyes, and a charming manner. I always felt comfortable and at home with Cissy; and she had a way of asking my advice, which, though I knew she did not always take it, I found very engaging. As for trying to describe her any further, heaven forbid that I should make such a venture. The many years I have known her have only served to whet my interest, certainly never to assuage it; and I will only add that I rarely refused an invitation to come and stay with her—if I could help it.

I had brought down a friend with me—a rather clever young journalist, who was considered very 'rising.' Cissy had met him when dining with me at the 'Dieudonné' one day, and, having taken a fancy to him, had asked him to accompany me.

Bonamy was what is called a very good fellow; he was good-natured, and interested in everything going on around him, and was very popular with everybody. If he had a fault, it appeared to me he was a little opinionated, and, for a quiet man like myself, was rather too energetic.

We had not been long in the house on this particular Friday, when I saw that Cissy had something on her mind. Though I am not

very quick at noticing those sort of things, I could not help seeing that she only kept her attention to the conversation with an effort. It was evident that her thoughts were wandering elsewhere. Now, Cissy very rarely allowed herself the luxury of wandering thoughts; or, at any rate, if she did, it was not observable to the ordinary eye.

I wondered what it could be. Cissy's life was upon such very comfortable lines. Though she had had a trying three years of married life, ending in the death of her husband under very painful circumstances, yet since that period she had had an uninterrupted career of peace. Pretty, popular, and with plenty of money, with two healthy children on whom to lavish her affections, everybody felt that Cissy was now able to enjoy herself. She had a nature, too, which did not worry itself about trifles; and worry, with many women, takes all the advantages of good fortune away.

There was another visitor in the house, a Miss Harbourough—a plain girl, with a good figure, who talked rather well. Cissy always had either a pretty girl or a clever girl staying with her, or one who 'did' something or other. The present example played and sang; and, as Bonamy dabbled in music amongst other things, they got on well together. They talked over all the great composers during dinner, and afterwards, when we returned to the drawing-room, were entirely absorbed in exchanging musical emotions at the piano.

Cissy and I sat listening to them in front of the cheerful wood-fire. In the interludes we had talked about the new pair of roans I had had the privilege of buying for her, and the respective merits of preparatory schools for her nine-year-old son, Tommy.

'Bertie,' she said presently, after a pause, during which Miss Harbourough had sung 'Poppy-Reserved.]

Land,' and Cissy had stared into the fire—'Bertie, come nearer. I've something to tell you.'

I was always treated as an incorrigible bachelor by my female relations. They confided in me with a charming candour, and treated me with a half-pitying, half-playful affection which was either pleasant or the reverse according to my inner feelings towards them. I got up and sat at the foot of the sofa, while she, from her nest of yellow cushions, leant a little towards me.

'Bertie, I am dreadfully worried. My diamond necklace has disappeared. The valuable one. You know it.'

'Disappeared!' I repeated, aghast. Of course I knew it. On state occasions it blazed forth in all its glory upon her neck. It was of great value, and was strictly entailed. Its loss would oblige her to replace it, or as nearly as she could do so.

'Yes; but I have told no one at present—I have reasons,' said Cissy.

'You have told no one? You ought to tell them at Scotland Yard at once. Each hour of delay diminishes the chance of finding it,' I exclaimed.

'Yes, I know all that. But there is something queer about it. It is very mysterious. There was no trace of the room being broken into; everything was just as I left it. So it must be some one from inside the house, you see.'

'How did it happen?' I questioned, eagerly.

'Well, it was like this. I wore it two days ago at the Ormesbys' dinner. I had it on when I returned, I know for certain, because something was wrong with the clasp, and I had quite a bother to undo it. Henning had gone to bed—I told her she needn't sit up, as she had a headache.'

'Where did you put it?' I queried. I felt so filled with the seriousness of the loss that I scarcely heard the music.

'Well, I am a little careless, as you know,' said Cissy, with a charming frankness, 'and I was sleepy, and did not put it in the safe. I slipped it into my drawer, under the handkerchiefs.'

'You are quite sure?'

'Yes, quite sure. I remember thinking to myself that I had heard it said that the safest place is sometimes quite an ordinary place, because no one would think it would be there; whereas, of course, they would go straight to the safe. And burglars are so clever they can get through anything nowadays.'

Although Cissy freely admitted her delinquencies, she always had very good reasons for the same.

'And you looked everywhere for it?'

'Yes, of course I did. I hunted everywhere.

Not because I expected to find it, but because I couldn't settle to anything else. I know I put it in that drawer.'

'And you told no one?'

'No; I knew you and Mr Bonamy were coming, and I wanted advice. You see, it must be some one in the house; and yet—I'm sure—it can't be. It is very perplexing.'

Cissy knitted her brows, a thing she rarely allowed herself to do, as she leant back in the cushions.

'Now, I want you to observe, and tell me what you think. You are so clever at reading people's characters.'

'Whom am I to observe?' I asked, after modestly disclaiming any such powers. But Cissy always prepared her prospective servitors by a little judicious praise.

'Everybody,' she replied; 'though you needn't suspect anybody.'

'I suppose it is one of the servants,' I remarked incautiously.

'I'm sure it isn't!' cried my cousin, very indignantly. 'I'm certain they know nothing about it. They would be greatly distressed if they knew. And they have nearly all of them been here for ever so long. And what would they do with such a thing? They couldn't sell it.'

'Oh, there are plenty of ways—though, of course, it would not be easy unless it was some one who knew how to set about it.'

'I'm sure it isn't the servants,' repeated Cissy decidedly.

'Still, I am to observe everybody?'

'Yes; I suppose you had better,' she admitted reluctantly.

'Well, let us begin. First of all there is'—I nodded my head in the direction of Miss Harborough at the piano, pointing as I did so to my first finger.

'Of course it wasn't she. It would be absurd,' cried my cousin under her breath.

I said nothing. With the notorious 'Clifford case' in my mind, however, I did not feel I had a right to be so certain.

'Well, then, there are the children?'

'Oh, there is no need to count them,' said Cissy sweetly; 'they were in bed. They would not dream of such a thing—even in fun. Besides, they would tell me at once all about it.'

'There is a young lady I caught sight of as I passed the schoolroom. Their governess, I suppose?'

'Yes; Miss Evans—a very nice girl. I have known her all her life.' Cissy said the last words with emphasis.

'Well, we had better go through the servants as a matter of form. What about them?'

'Oh, there is Jenkins—dear old thing. Of course I couldn't have him suspected. He is so

religious. He prays for us all, I believe. He's a Wesleyan.'

'Yes,' I answered dubiously. I was not so overcome by these proofs of innocence as was my cousin.

'Then there is Emery. She is almost too conscientious. The other servants complain that she looks after everything so that they hardly get enough to eat. And the kitchenmaid is the gamekeeper's daughter—an exceedingly well-behaved girl, *and pretty*.'

Cissy looked at me almost reproachfully as she delivered the last words.

'The upper-housemaid was recommended by Lady Trower,' she continued after a pause; 'she had been with them five years. The under one is delicate. I give her cod-liver oil. And she has no mother.'

I did not venture any remark for a minute or two; then I said, 'There is the footman, and you have a maid, I believe?'

'Yes. I don't know much about the footman, I must confess. He has red hands, and I don't like his manner. But Henning is a treasure. I never have to puzzle about what I shall wear. She always knows.'

'Well,' I said after a pause, 'I suppose I must try and live up to my character; though I *thought*—you thought—I was not particularly good at that sort of thing.'

I looked at her a little suspiciously, I suppose, for Cissy laughed.

'Now, there's Bonamy,' I continued; 'he's the chap. It is just the sort of job he'd love.'

'Ah! I thought so,' cried my cousin enthusiastically.

'I suppose you really meant *him* all the time, only you didn't want to—hurt my feelings?' I remarked, with an unusual burst of perception.

'Never inquire what a woman means,' answered Cissy, giving my arm an affectionate little pat. 'Leave it in mystery; it is so much more interesting. At any rate, I feel certain he will discover something.'

'He *looks* as if he saw nothing at all,' I believe I said, with a faint tinge of jealousy.

'Yes; that's the only way to observe,' said Cissy, with a wise little shake of her pretty fluffy head. 'Everything is hidden behind its contrary. For instance, I am often most wise when I appear most otherwise.'

'I'm sure you are,' I replied warmly.

Cissy smiled serenely. 'Well, you may tell him all about it, and if he—neither of you—notices anything by Monday, we'll send to Scotland Yard.'

'They will say it is three days lost.'

'I don't care what they say. It is my affair.'

I knew that if she had made up her mind it would take a very fatiguing amount of convincing

argument to make her alter it. So I did not press the point.

'Do you sleep with your door locked?' I asked presently.

'Nearly always, though I sometimes forget it; and I have had the windows arranged with very secure fastenings, and the shutters.'

'And you say there was no trace of any one entering from outside?'

'None. Everything was just as it was left—no traces of any one. Even the drawer was not disarranged.'

At that moment the music ceased, and Miss Harborough and Bonamy came towards us. We entered into conversation for a little while, and then the two ladies went to bed, and Bonamy and I retired to the smoking-room.

I told him everything I had heard, and the way he listened was quite gratifying. His eyes were fixed upon me, or, at intervals, he leaned his head back in the low arm-chair and stared up at the ceiling.

'It is most extraordinary. We must get at the bottom of it,' he said eagerly.

'I thought it would be in your line,' I remarked encouragingly.

'I must think it over. I really should not have made a bad detective,' he said meditatively. 'There was that affair of my aunt's, you remember?'

I did remember. But I knew Bonamy liked to tell the story, so I asked him for the details, which described how he had very successfully tracked down a burglar.

'She wants you to notice everybody,' he said presently, as we resumed the subject. 'She must have suspicions.'

'I'm sure she hasn't,' I replied confidently. 'She was ready to jump down my throat if I so much as looked suspiciously about anybody.'

'That is very like a woman,' said Bonamy.

'You have had more experience with them than I have,' I remarked deferentially. Bonamy was considerably younger than I, but he had had three children, and had just married his second wife.

'It comes to one,' he said modestly. 'But it is possible—with women—to be on the wrong track.'

'Have you any idea about it?' I said at last. He had relapsed into silence, accompanied by voluminous puffs of tobacco.

'I have several ideas,' he replied confidently; 'but they are not sufficiently developed to discuss at present.'

We went off to other topics; and Bonamy, who is fond of pictures, went into raptures over a little painting over the mantelpiece, with the dark figure of a man and some sheep against a lurid sunset. He talked of pictures that night, and also the next morning, and appeared as if he had quite forgotten we were occupied with any-

thing besides. I myself had thought of nothing else but the lost necklace. I was fond of Cissy, and also I felt interested. I even lay awake part of the night considering the matter—a thing of which I distinctly disapproved, as after a certain time of life one has to be careful.

After breakfast Cissy showed us over the house, in consideration of Bonamy, who was an enthusiast in all departments of architecture. It was an interesting building, in the Tudor style, with mullioned windows and some stained glass, and many of the rooms were oak-panelled. One wing of it was shut up and never used. It was the room where Sir Henry Donnithorne, Cissy's husband, had died by his own hand in a fit of madness, having attempted the nurse's life and Cissy's. It was supposed by the servants and people around to be haunted, and no one ventured near it. I saw Bonamy look down the corridor which led towards it as we passed, but he did not say anything, as I had warned him about it, and Cissy hurried past and took us in another direction.

We went into the schoolroom on our way downstairs, and Bonamy, who was very much at home with children, at once made friends with Gwendoline and Tommy. Cissy introduced us to Miss Evans—a tall, fair girl, with a pale face and rather an anxious manner. We stood and chatted with her for a few minutes on the new methods of teaching, and intimated that we wished we had had the advantages of a modern education.

'Miss Evans is a very successful teacher,' said Cissy, who managed others much as she did myself. 'Even Tommy likes his lessons.'

'Oh—I—say!' protested that young gentleman, as he tilted his chair back as far as it was tiltable.

'He likes some of them very much,' said

Gwendoline, who was always ready with conversation. 'But he thinks it sounds better to pretend he doesn't. I myself don't see anything to be ashamed of,' she added as she tossed back her wavy hair. Gwendoline was very like her mother.

Miss Evans was not listening to her pupils' remarks. She was staring out of the window. I noticed that Bonamy for an instant scrutinised her face as he talked to the children.

At luncheon Cissy informed me that she had ordered the mail-phæton, and was going to take me over to Cravenswood, a pretty place some seven miles distant.

'He wishes to stop at home and photograph,' she added in a whisper to me, glancing at Bonamy, who was replenishing Tommy's plate with cheese-cakes, as he talked to Miss Harborough.

'The light will be excellent. I shall do several of the house,' he remarked presently. 'And may I take some of the interiors? I should like the library, with the rose and portcullis ceiling, and that quaint little room off the spiral stairs.'

'That is my room,' said Miss Evans quickly.

'Oh, I beg your pardon,' replied Bonamy. 'I wouldn't disturb you on any account.'

'But you'll be taking the children for a walk—won't you?' said Cissy as she helped Gwendoline to some pudding. 'And I should like that old fireplace photographed; I believe it is the oldest in the house. I'm sure you won't mind.'

'Oh, certainly not,' answered the girl. But as she glanced at Bonamy I felt instinctively that she did mind, or else that for some reason she very much disliked him. I could not be sure which. It struck me as being rather curious.

SOME DIPLOMATIC CURIOSITIES.

LO the aspirant for diplomatic honours there are sundry qualifications necessary for his success. In the first place he must possess an inordinate amount of patience; though, if he follows any other walk of life, he will probably be told that that is necessary. Then he must have a private income of, at least, four hundred a year. Besides these two qualifications, he must be an accomplished linguist, and must possess both the ability and the desire to 'lie and roar' for his country. With these qualities and a certain amount of influence, he will, after a severe training at Downing Street, be given a small appointment at some legation, where he will get plenty of work and little fame. The British member of the *Corps Diplomatique* has,

however, this advantage over his foreign brother, that on the Continent a great deal of notice is taken of the diplomatic service, whilst in England it is a negligible quantity. It is doubtful if any Englishmen, save, of course, those who have intimate dealings with them, know the names of more than two of the Ministers representing foreign nations at the court of St James. On the other hand, diplomats on the Continent live in a blaze of glory. Those amiable old diplomats, famous after-dinner story-tellers that only foreign countries seem able to produce, are never more pleased than when they are accredited to the court of St James; whereas the same appointment would be perdition to a young, active, forty-year-old diplomatist. It may seem strange, except to those of about the same age,

to call a diplomatist of forty years of age young ; but the youngest diplomatist in England is the Minister representing what we are pleased to call the youngest country, Japan, and he is just forty-one. There is only one younger Minister in all the courts of Europe, and he is also a Japanese Minister, only thirty-six years of age.

To the general public the most important thing about an ambassador is his dress, and the most important thing about his dress is his sword. The blade of the sword is a rapier blade, with the point blunted. The use that the sword is put to, in addition to its trick of tripping up its wearer, is usually the harmless one of poking fires ; one diplomatist is said to file his bills on his sword when it is not otherwise engaged, and a standing witticism of the *Corps Diplomatique* is that the Russian ambassadors use their swords to file broken treaties, which is said to account for the inordinate length of their weapons. In very few cases has the diplomatic sword been a serviceable weapon. Many years ago, when relations between France and Germany were strained, the members of the German Legation in Paris are said to have adopted cavalry swords for the better protection of a member of one of their royal families, who unluckily happened to be in Paris at that time. Again, a few years ago the Japanese Minister in China substituted an old Japanese sword-blade for his dull rapier. The Japanese sword-blades go through innumerable processes in the course of making, and are the finest in the world, being able to cut through iron like paper. The Japanese Minister is reported to have said that with one of these by his side he would not mind being taken into the confidence of a mandarin. An ambassador on his entrance to the diplomatic service usually purchases a court suit, and as he rises adds the fresh orders and extra bits of gold lace. This course is economical ; but it has one fault. Whilst the suit remains the same size, the ambassador usually has a tendency to corpulence—a tendency fostered by dinners and after-dinner convivialities. In England, when ambassadors attend the levees held by the Prince of Wales, or by some other member of the Royal Family deputed to take his place, they wear trousers with a broad gold band running down one side of the legs—trousers that closely resemble those worn by certain attendants that can be seen standing outside licensed houses of refreshment. When, however, an ambassador appears before the Queen he has to wear knee-breeches. A few nations, for the most part unimportant ones that pride themselves on being up-to-date, have refused to allow their representatives to follow this antiquated custom. In these cases the diplomatists, seeing that they must wear something different from their everyday dress, have decided to wear lavender-coloured trousers with broad gold bands running down the seams. If they had only come

under the influence of William Morris, they might have chosen the more regal purple as the colour of their nether garments.

There are two peculiarities of the American diplomatists. The first is, that they are even worse paid than the English diplomatists. The other is, that their ambassadorial dress is the common or garden evening-dress, with the different orders scattered over it. Both of these peculiarities are sore points with American ambassadors. Those who saw the Diamond Jubilee procession will probably remember a carriage containing a gentleman wrapped up on that sweltering day in an Inverness cape. He was the American Minister. Seeing the incongruity of appearing in evening-dress at a ceremony taking place in the middle of the day, while every one else was resplendent in gold lace, orders, and ribbons, he shielded himself from the piercing rays of the sun with a thick Inverness cape. The first envoy of the United States was Benjamin Franklin, master printer. He presented himself at the splendid court of Louis XVI. at Versailles. On this occasion the French king was wearing a coat embroidered with diamonds ; the diamonds on the coat alone were valued at forty thousand pounds. His courtiers were attired in the same luxurious fashion. Franklin appeared in his Sunday best : a brown homespun cutaway, something like our evening-dress with the swallow-tails cut off, brown smalls reaching to the knees, a white kerseymere waistcoat, rough woollen stockings, a pair of thick-soled shoes with silver buckles, old-fashioned frill, fob, &c. A suggestion, worthy of American conception, has been made that the ambassadorial dress of the American Ministers should be a replica of that which Franklin wore on his first appearance at Versailles. The only people that have any objections to raise are the Ministers who will have to wear the dress if the idea is adopted. They imagine they will be too much like walking advertisements. Another suggestion, due to the war-fever, is that all American ambassadors should wear the uniform of a general of the United States army. Not only are America's representatives to have the dress, they are to have the rank of general, with all the rights, dignities, and privileges thereto appertaining ; this, perhaps, is one of those little things that help to show the trend of American feeling.

A curious privilege of an ambassador is that he, and he alone, when dismissed, may turn his back to the sovereign to whose court he is accredited. The mode of procedure is as follows : When the ambassador's audience is over he waits to be dismissed by the sovereign. (There is only one instance of a sovereign—the Emperor of Russia—being dismissed instead of giving a dismissal ; and then he was not dismissed by an ambassador, but by the peaceful journalist to whom he had granted an interview.) When dismissed the ambassador bows, retires three paces, bows again, retires another

three paces, bows a third time, turns on his heels, and walks to the folding-doors. But it is felt that more polite methods should obtain when the reigning sovereign is a woman. To turn his back is to be discourteous, to walk backwards is to resign a privilege; the ambassador retires sideways, like a crab; he keeps one eye on the sovereign, and with the other tries to see the door. He thus shows politeness to the sovereign and at the same time retains one of his privileges. As the ambassador is usually an aged gentleman, often short-sighted, he sometimes fails to reach the door, and comes into collision with the wall instead. It is surprising how some of the younger members of the court contrive to maintain their composure at these little incidents.

Another privilege of ambassadors is the right of being ushered into the royal presence through folding-doors, both of which must be flung wide open. No one except an ambassador can claim this privilege; the most any non-ambassadorial person can expect is that one of the leaves shall be opened to him. The reason for this privilege is not known. There are certain irreverent suggestions that have been made; but we prefer to be silent with regard to them. Another privilege, capable of causing great inconvenience, is the ambassador's right of admission to the sovereign at any hour of day or night. Thus the Minister representing some little bankrupt state could go down to Windsor and demand an audience at four o'clock in the morning. The audience would have to be granted, though it could be delayed by the exercise of ingenuity.

With regard to the use of British embassies to Englishmen travelling abroad, there is one privilege difficult to obtain, and not worth much when it is obtained. If you are going to a foreign country, you inform some influential friend in the Foreign Office of the fact. He will send you what is known as the 'soup ticket.' This introduces you to the British Minister at the foreign capital you happen to be going to. The Minister on receiving this 'soup ticket' will invite you to dinner—one dinner and no more. That is the advantage of having a friend in the Foreign Office. The Americans are the only people who make much use of their consuls and ambassadors. Most of us know the coolness of the American girl either by experience or by hearsay. The 'poppa' of one American girl happened to control a large number of votes. Whenever his daughter came over to Europe she used to send her trunks

and other impedimenta along to the American Embassy. They were always taken in. The next elections would have been rather awkward if the ambassador had refused.

The ground on which a foreign legation stands is considered as belonging to the country whose flag floats from the legation roof. Supposing a member of a foreign legation in London committed a murder, all we could do would be to 'suggest' (a favourite diplomatic word, always used, except in relation to China) that the offender should be sent back to his native country and punished there. Some time ago, when a certain gentleman, whose name was well known at the time, was kidnapped into the Chinese Legation, an inspector from Scotland Yard immediately proceeded thither and released the prisoner. This was a most serious breach of international law, and was intently discussed 'in diplomatic circles.' Since the Chinese Legation is part and parcel of China, an invasion of the Celestial Empire was thus made by a Scotland Yard official. One almost forgets how long ago it is since the Muzzling Order was first issued; but shortly after the inception of that order a housemaid 'attached' to a foreign legation took a pug dog, also 'attached' to the same legation, out for a walk. She was stopped by a constable, who asked her why the dog was not wearing a muzzle. The housemaid replied that the dog did not possess a muzzle, because it was a diplomatic dog. The constable responded that the dog was a pug, and that he was not a fool. The constable took the name and address of the housemaid. A few days later a summons arrived at the legation. The housemaid did not present herself at the court, and the magistrate imposed a fine on her. At last the foreign Minister went to the Marquis of Salisbury about the matter. The result was that all the officials connected with the case were reprimanded; and a 'note' was addressed from Lord Salisbury to all the legations in London, in which note Lord Salisbury said he had the honour to call attention to a certain order entitled the Muzzling Order, by which it was enacted that all dogs, when taken into public places, should wear a muzzle over the head. Taking into consideration the present friendly relations existing between Her Britannic Majesty and the other Powers, might he suggest that, as a favour, all dogs belonging to the different legations should be muzzled when taken into the streets, or, if not muzzled, should be led on a leash?



OF ROYAL BLOOD.
A TALE OF THE SECRET SERVICE.

By WILLIAM LE QUEUX.

CHAPTER VI.—IN CIPHER.

HALF-AN-HOUR passed. Accompanied by the girl Primrose, I made a tour of the house; but it was evident that the dead man's wife had fled. Therefore, after full deliberation, I despatched the servant with a note to the police station, asking that an inspector might be sent, but not stating any reason. I instructed the girl to remain silent for the present, and waited patiently until the officer arrived.

Then I took him into the drawing-room, and, when we were alone, said :

'An extraordinary affair has occurred in this house; but there are reasons why the matter should for the present remain absolutely secret—reasons which will become obvious when I explain the position of the parties concerned.'

He was a smart, youngish, rather pleasant-faced man, who listened gravely while I related the whole of the facts. His brow contracted when I told him how Lord Macclesfield had instructed me to travel down to Richmond and hear the statement of the man whom I had discovered dead, and he gave vent to an exclamation of suspicion when I told him the story related by the girl Primrose.

'I'll see him,' the inspector exclaimed when I had finished; therefore I led the way across the hall into the small room where poor Gordon was stretched out upon the red velvet couch.

The officer, to whom a mystery of this description and magnitude was not of everyday occurrence, glanced quickly round the room, turned the body slightly upon its side, and then, noticing no sign of a struggle, exclaimed :

'I see no evidence of foul play. Do you?'

'No,' I answered; 'none whatever. But this window was unfastened, and there in that tray is part of a freshly-smoked cigar.'

'Strange,' he said, examining the ashes closely. 'That points to the fact that he had a visitor,' I said.

'Why?'

'Because he never smoked cigars; always cigarettes.'

'Ah!' observed the officer. 'That may serve as a very valuable clue.' Then passing into the dining-room, where the girl Primrose was standing, he submitted her to a searching cross-examination regarding her statement to me, and especially with reference to the tall, fair man who had called upon her mistress in the earlier part of the day. From the girl's reply it was

quite evident that she was concealing nothing, and that she had been much more observant than one would have supposed a servant to be. It was also clear that she entertained some ill-defined suspicion of her mistress, though of what neither of us could exactly make out.

At length the inspector, whose name was Glass, sent for the divisional surgeon, who lived on the Hill a little lower down, and also for the plainclothes officer attached to that station.

Without delay the doctor, a stout, red-faced man, arrived, and, after the officer had given him a brief explanation, made a cursory examination of the body.

'He must have died about two hours ago,' he observed, rising from his knees and puffing after the exertion.

'There are no signs of violence?' suggested the officer.

'None whatever. From all outward appearance death was due to sudden failure of the heart's action.'

'Natural causes?'

'I expect so. Of course I must make a post-mortem later, and then I shall be able to speak with greater confidence,' the doctor answered. 'At present there seem no grounds to suspect that death was due to violence. But his wife and the servants have left, you say. Strange, is it not?'

'Very curious—very,' answered Glass. 'I'm confident there's some mystery or other; but what it is there's certainly, as yet, nothing to show.'

'Have you noticed this, doctor?' I asked, taking up the blotting-pad and handing it to him.

He touched the yellow stain with his finger, sniffed it, and, after holding the pad to the light and examining it carefully, said in the uncertain tone of one puzzled :

'I wonder what was spilt here?'

'Isn't it acid of some sort?' I inquired.

'Perhaps.' Then, turning to the inspector, he added : 'It will be better to preserve that. We may want to analyse it.'

I divined by the doctor's manner that he was undecided in his opinion. There were no marks of violence. It appeared as though poor Gordon, having been sitting at his writing-table, became suddenly unwell, and while resting upon the couch had expired before he could summon aid. Yet, if such theory were true, why had that voluminous document been burned, and why had Judith, his wife, fled after my arrival? Was it

because, ignorant of Gordon's death, she feared the exposure which I had threatened; or was it because she knew of his decease, and had escaped before I could discover the truth?

About this time the detective was ushered in by the girl Primrose; and, after hearing a brief explanation of the facts, he looked at the body, and then wandered from room to room, discovering nothing. He expressed an opinion which to me was certainly an absurd one—namely, that my friend's wife, discovering that he had died, had sent out the remaining two servants, and then herself had gone forth to seek some intimate friend. It was quite likely, he declared, that a woman should do this, for her natural instinct is to seek some one to console her in distress.

He, however, had no knowledge of the woman's character, and of course I did not enter into unnecessary detail. The one thought possessing me at that moment was a recollection of Lord Macclesfield's doubt consequent upon the mysterious statement which my friend had made. So startling and so utterly confusing had it been that his lordship had deemed it best that I should be aware of all the facts ere I set forth on my secret mission to Brussels. The terribly sudden death of this man who had made the amazing revelations, whatever they were, was certainly an extraordinary development; and it was, I saw, imperative that his lordship should learn the truth at the earliest possible moment.

I waited an hour in that silent house where lay the body of my friend, but Judith did not return. There was, of course, no direct evidence that he had died from any but natural causes, yet her absence increased our suspicion.

Both servants returned in due course, and were dumb with amazement on finding the house in the possession of the police. We heard their story, which was plain and straightforward enough. Their mistress, after my arrival, had given them leave to go out, saying that Ann would return shortly, therefore they could remain out till nine. They had gone out together, and walked along as far as Kew Bridge and back.

'And you know nothing of your master being in the house when you went out?' the detective asked of the cook, a responsible, middle-aged woman.

'No,' she replied. 'Master went out as usual this morning, and mistress told me that he would not be back to dinner.'

'Neither of you took a telegram to the post-office this morning about ten o'clock?' I asked.

'No, sir,' was the response.

It was therefore evident that Gordon had sent the telegraphic excuse to Downing Street himself, on his way out. Likewise, it was more than curious that his wife should have kept his return secret from the servants. The deeper

we probed the mystery the more inexplicable it became.

'Had you any idea that your mistress intended to go out?' the inspector inquired of the cook.

'None whatever. If she went out, Ann could not get in. She told me that she would remain at home, as she had been out the greater part of the day and was very tired.'

Many were the questions we put to the three domestics, but their knowledge threw no further light upon the mystery. Therefore, having given my name and address to the police, I left and returned at once to London, arriving at Waterloo a little after ten o'clock.

Without delay I took a hansom, and twenty minutes later was admitted to the great gloomy hall of the Premier's fine mansion in Grosvenor Square.

'Is Lord Macclesfield in, Budd?' I inquired of the aged retainer who had spent all his life in the service of the family.

'Yes, sir; but he's engaged. Is the business pressing?'

'Yes; it's official,' I said. 'Send in my card;' and I handed him one.

'Count Cusani, the secretary of the Italian Embassy, is with him; and his lordship said that I was not to disturb him. I'm very sorry, sir.'

'Then I'll wait,' I said, and without further word walked on into the small cosy room opposite, wherein representatives of every nation in the world have, at one time or another, sat awaiting the pleasure of the ruler of Europe. I knew the house well, having many times had occasion to call there to see his lordship. Indeed, night and day he was always visible on matters of pressing importance. His capacity for work was enormous, and his attention to duty a model for those junior clerks in the Foreign Office who preferred to read the *Times* and smoke cigarettes to performing the work for which the country paid them. Old Budd, too, known to every foreign diplomatist in London, from the Russian Ambassador down to the Liberian Minister, was a sharp-witted, amusing old fellow, of courtly manner and impressive voice; and while I sat there I chatted with him.

'I haven't seen you lately, sir,' the old man said presently.

'No,' I answered. 'Of late I've been at Constantinople.'

'Pooh!' he exclaimed. 'Sir Richard Davis was there once, and Colonel Poole was once military attaché. Both gentlemen told me it was a horrid place. You're better in London than there, they said.'

'They were right, Budd,' I laughed. 'But when you get a post abroad you have to put up with the uncomfortable as well as enjoy the comfortable. I really believe you'd have made a good ambassador.'

'No, sir,' laughed the old man heartily, for

he loved a joke. 'I shouldn't be able to take things so calmly as those gentlemen do. I'm afraid I should be for fighting, rather than for diplomacy.'

'Then, Budd, you'd be a dangerous man,' I said, while at the same instant an electric bell sounded; and, begging me to excuse him, he went forth into the hall.

The door being ajar, I heard the swish of silken skirts as a lady passed, and the stately old man opened the outer door and showed her out. Then I heard his lordship's voice telling his man that he would see me in a few moments.

'Who was the lady?' I asked Budd when he returned to me.

'A stranger, sir.'

'Young?'

'Yes. Rather good-looking;' and the old man winked knowingly.

'Ah, Budd!' I said, 'even though they call you an old fossil you're as keen as a knife, and you've got a good eye for pretty women.'

'When I was a youngster, sir, I was reckoned a bit of a don. But now'— and the old fellow pulled a long face and sighed without finishing his sentence.

I laughed.

In the diplomatic world of London, especially among the feminine section of it, old Budd's courtesy and the manner in which he tucked up the pretty women in their carriages had long been a subject of comment. He was ugly and wizened, but he had the manners of a prince, and was as attentive to the ladies as their lovers.

'Did that lady who has just gone out give any card?' I inquired.

'Yes; but I was in a hurry and didn't read the name,' he replied. Then he added: 'I fancy his lordship didn't want to see her, for she was only in his room about two minutes, and was then dismissed rather abruptly.'

'How do you know?'

'I can always tell by the manner his lordship shuts the door whether he's in a good humour or not.'

'And he's in a bad humour to-night—eh?'

'Yes, rather,' he answered confidentially. 'Sir Thomas Ridley, the Permanent Under-Secretary, has been here all the evening, and I fancy the outlook is serious.'

Just then the electric bell again rang, and old Budd led the way to the large roomy chamber which I knew so well, the private, thickly-carpeted room of the trusted Prime-Minister and Foreign Secretary of Her Majesty the Queen.

The three long windows were heavily curtained, and upon the two large writing-tables, littered with State documents and despatches, four green-shaded lamps shed a zone of light, the remainder of the room being in semi-darkness.

Within the circle of light was a leather armchair, and, in response to his lordship's invitation,

I seated myself in it. It was not the first time I had sat there; and I knew how cunningly that chair was placed, so that the visitor had the light upon him while the great statesman's face remained in the shadow. As I looked across the table I only saw the pale, serious countenance shadowy and indistinct in the gloom. He had a quill in his thin hand, and had been signing some papers as I entered. On the farther side of that old-fashioned room, wherein so much of the business of the empire was transacted, hung a large portrait of Her Majesty, just visible where the fitful glow of the fire fell upon it, and on a small table opposite was fixed the private telegraph instrument which enabled the Permanent Secretary at the Foreign Office to communicate with his chief at any hour, night or day.

'Well, Crawford, this visit is a rather late one,' he exclaimed in a voice which betrayed impatience. He usually worked alone at night, without even a secretary, and I knew he hated to be disturbed.

'I have to apologise,' I answered; 'but the matter is one which appears to be of pressing importance, in view of the confidence you have already reposed in me.'

'And what is it?' he inquired in a dry, calm tone.

'It is with regard to your instructions to see Gordon Clunes before I leave for Brussels.'

'Well, you have seen him?' he said, glancing at me quickly with his keen, penetrating eyes. 'What is your opinion regarding his statement?'

'I have not been able to get any statement from him,' I answered. 'I regret to say that he is dead.'

'Dead!' gasped his lordship, starting from his chair. 'Is this the truth, Crawford?' he cried.

'Yes, unfortunately,' I answered. 'I found him in his house alone, dead; and from certain appearances a mystery appears to surround the cause of his decease.'

'Clunes dead?' the great statesman echoed. 'Impossible!'

'He had been dead an hour at least before I found him,' I said.

His lordship's hand clenched as it lay upon the table before him.

'And that—that woman—what of her?' he asked, with a look of firm determination upon his blanched face, and laying stress upon the word 'woman.' 'Where is she?'

'She has fled,' I answered briefly.

'Fled!' he cried, standing glaring at me as one dumfounded. 'Do you mean that she has disappeared?'

I nodded.

'Then not an instant must be lost,' exclaimed the controller of England's destiny, touching the electric button upon the table. 'The coup of our enemies has been effected with an ingenuity and swiftness absolutely incredible. England's honour

is involved in this affair, how deeply only myself and another are aware; but at all cost our dignity and prestige must be preserved. This complication is most serious, and creates a crisis the most acute of the many which have occurred during the period of my administration. Our enemies must be outwitted and crushed, or this will indeed be a sorry day in the history of our Government and our country.'

At that instant the private secretary entered, and his lordship, addressing him, said :

'Get the Paris telephone switched on. I must speak with the Embassy at once.'

Matters were indeed serious, for, while the secretary was 'ringing-up,' his lordship took from a locked drawer a small volume containing the secret cipher code for despatches, and after consulting it carefully, wrote a long string of figures upon a sheet of paper.

Presently, after the lapse of some ten minutes, and while I still sat there watching, the secretary

announced they were 'on' to the Embassy in Paris, and that the First Secretary was awaiting his lordship.

At once Lord Macclesfield handed his secretary the slip, whereupon the latter went to the transmitter and in a clear, mechanical voice spoke the usual formal preface, 'From the Marquess of Macclesfield to Lord Lyndhurst, Paris,' and afterwards carefully read out figure after figure with clearness and distinctness, repeating the message, so that there could be no possibility of error.

'End,' the secretary exclaimed, after concluding the unintelligible array of numerals; and as he hung up the receiver the tiny bell rang off.

Thus in those few brief seconds had a secret despatch been sent beneath the sea, and Her Majesty's ambassador in the French capital informed of the latest turn of events.

Who could say what were his instructions, or what was contained in that cipher communication?

LIVINGSTONIA MISSION AND CENTRAL AFRICA.

By DR GEORGE SMITH, C.I.E.



DAVID LIVINGSTONE'S desire was to reveal the sources of the Nile. He achieved the far greater practical result of discovering and opening up the most important access to the heart of tropical Africa from the mouths of the Zambesi. Only forty years have passed since Lord Palmerston's Government sent him back to the scene of his earliest triumph at the head of the Admiralty's steamship *Pioneer* Expedition, with this despatch addressed to the chiefs by Lord Clarendon : 'Ours is a great and a Christian nation, and we desire to live in peace with all men. We hate the trade in slaves. The Queen sends a small steam vessel to sail along the river Zambesi, which you know and agreed to be the best pathway for conveying merchandise. This is "God's highway."

Thus, in 1858, the British Government entered the south-east end of the great Rift of Africa, which—by the Zambesi and the Shiré, the four lakes, Nyasa, Tanganyika, Albert and Victoria Nyanza, and the Nile—ends at the Mediterranean Sea. It seems as if nature had hollowed the land and supplied the water for the redemption of tropical Africa. Yet for some twelve centuries, since the Mohammedans overran the Soudan and the eastern coast-lands, and the Portuguese sealed up the Zambesi and the Rovuma against the rest of Christendom, the mute invitation to civilisation to use 'God's highway' was neglected. It was left to the Scottish people, through the Livingstone Mission, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, to be no longer disobedient to the heavenly vision.

Dr James Stewart was the first to join Livingstone at the Luabo mouth of the Zambesi early in 1862. Then an eager medical graduate of Glasgow and licentiate of divinity in the Free Church of Scotland, he went out, partly at his own cost, to survey the river and lake country. The time for action seemed to be then premature. There was a new upheaval of the slave-raiding interests, which resulted in the cessation of the English Universities Mission under the Scotch Bishop, Mackenzie; so Stewart was sent to Lovendale in the far south, to prepare that great institution to help in the new mission when it should be equipped. From 1858 the years passed on, while Livingstone tramped tropical Africa in his beneficent enterprise and geographical enthusiasm. His death and the burial of his body in Westminster Abbey, while his heart lies at the headwaters of the Congo, roused all Scotland. The sixteen years from 1858 to 1874 were not lost. Again James Stewart was in Scotland, where he planned the new enterprise, raised the funds, and fairly founded the Livingstone Mission, bearing the name of the master he had just helped to bury in the Abbey nave, consecrated by the dust of heroes.

The enterprise was at once missionary and national. In 1874-5 crowded meetings were held in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Dundee, at which peers and judges like the first Lord Moncreiff vied with merchant-princes like Young of Kelly, James Stevenson, White of Overton, Sir William Mackinnon, Sir William Henderson, Sir John Cowan, Coats of Paisley, and R. A. Macfie of Dreghorn, in practical zeal for the

cause of Africa. In the first year eleven thousand pounds were raised, of which Glasgow gave half and Edinburgh one-third. The three Scottish Churches co-operated in the undertaking. The Free Church of Scotland organised the whole, led by Dr Stewart, who went on in advance to South Africa to prepare the way. The United Presbyterian Church supplied Dr Robert Laws, a man worthy of Livingstone and Stewart, who has for twenty-five years developed the Mission to its present remarkable position. These two Churches sent out the first expedition to Lake Nyasa, consisting of medical and artisan missionaries and the *Ilala* steamer, commanded by Mr R. Young, R.N., whom the Admiralty lent for the purpose. The six were Dr Robert Laws, medical missionary; George Johnston, joiner; John M'Fadyen, engineer and blacksmith; Allan Simpson, second engineer; Alexander Riddel, agriculturist, and William Baker, seaman. Dr Stewart himself joined at Algoa Bay the second expedition, consisting of these reinforcements: Dr Black, second medical missionary; John Gunn, agriculturist; Robert S. Ross, engineer; and Archibald C. Miller, weaver. This party was also accompanied by Mr Henderson, representing the Established Church of Scotland. It found the Livingstonia Mission successfully planted at Cape Maclear, at the south end of Lake Nyasa, which the *Ilala* had entered on the 12th of October 1875. In a brotherly and business-like way its missionaries, already housed and in the command of skilled and native labour, helped Mr Henderson to found his Blantyre Mission in the Shiré highlands to the south. Dr James Stewart, after a time, retired to Lovedale; his cousin, a civil engineer of the same name, threw up a lucrative appointment in India to give himself to the Livingstonia Mission; and Dr Laws became the trusted and now experienced leader of the Livingstonia enterprise.

The two Missions found themselves, as they had expected, in a No-man's Land, among tribes of the Zulu and Kaffir varieties, who were either terror-stricken slaves on the lake and river shores, or bloodthirsty raiders swooping down from the healthier uplands. Yet the Zambesi, Shiré, and coast approaches to the lake-country were commanded by the Portuguese from Quilimane, whose administration was obstructive, while their claim to the hinterland was none the less annoying that it was ineffective.

Unlike Lord Clarendon, the Foreign Office of 1875 refused Livingstonia a British Consul. Worse than either Portuguese or Zulus, who nevertheless favoured their infamous traffic, were the so-called Arabs from the coast. These scoured the country, setting tribe against tribe, and carrying off slaves at the rate of nineteen thousand a year, as officially reported, to supply concubines and eunuchs to the Mohammedans of Asia. The Scottish staff, increasing every year, found itself exposed to the deadly malarious

fever, which, in the form of the 'black-water' scourge, seemed to strike down the healthiest and strongest. The heroism and the hardships of Dr Laws and his associates in the first fifteen years of the Mission cannot be exaggerated. Very wisely had Dr Stewart drawn up the instructions which formed their code of laws, civil and ecclesiastical. As British subjects they were amenable to the nearest court, the Supreme Court of Cape Colony, thousands of miles away. Yet the British Government gave them neither protection nor advice for a time, and then merely stationed a consular agent at Blantyre. The Livingstonia Scotsmen, guided by the Aberdeen caution and self-sacrificing wisdom of Robert Laws, made no mistake. Gradually the peoples of the western shores of Lake Nyasa, and even its uplands, learned to trust them. Carrying the message of peace—*Pax Evangelistica*, including *Pax Britannica*—all around the fine but often stormy inland sea, three hundred and fifty miles long by sixty broad, the *Ilala* was at once a hope to the terror-stricken and a warning to the slave-trader. Indirectly only, the Mission as a mission thus applied the principles of Jesus Christ to slavery, and with a far more rapid success than the old world of Roman paganism ever witnessed.

While evangelising and working at their industrial tasks at Cape Maclear, the missionaries had two preliminary difficulties of no ordinary magnitude to master before they could advance. They must survey the lake and its western and northern uplands, leaving the eastern shore and Likoma Island to the renewed Universities Mission; and they must master the languages, especially the Nyanja. Accordingly, important contributions were made to geographical science by the voyages and trampings of Dr Stewart and Dr Laws, both F.R.G.S., in 1877; by Mr J. Stewart, C.E., and Dr Laws in 1878; and by Mr J. Stewart and Mr John Moir in 1879. In subsequent years also other members of the Mission, such as Dr Elmslie and Alexander Bain, as well as Professor Henry Drummond, explored Nyasaland, south by Chikusi's country towards the Zambesi, and north up the Songwé and the great plateau to Lake Tanganyika and even Mweru and Bangweolo. Thus prominent points and healthy sites were selected for stations, the chiefs were conciliated, land was acquired, and the medical and educational blessings of the Mission were made known far and wide. Then Messrs J. Stewart and W. M'Ewan, C.E., laid down their lives in the construction of the Stevenson Road from Karonga, the port at the head of Lake Nyasa, up to the plateau and on to the southern shore of Lake Tanganyika.

Cape Maclear, the climate of which had claimed such victims as Dr Black, was soon left to the charge of the first convert of the Mission, under the supervision of the Rev. Andrew C. Murray,

who began a mission supported by the Dutch Reformed ministers of South Africa, in kindly co-operation with the Free Church of Scotland. Bandawé, a promontory on the west shore of Lake Nyasa, half-way up, was permanently occupied as the chief missionary port, and brick buildings were erected there in 1881. Dr Laws there found himself among the Atonga people, with a new language to overcome. But far more serious was the fact that these tribes were the slaves of the Zulu warriors in the uplands, the Ngoni. These too must be won. For more than two years he and Dr W. A. Elmslie, James Sutherland (from Wick), and William Koyi (Dr Stewart's Kaffir from Lovedale) lived and worked in peril of their lives, which, indeed, the two last laid down as truly as any martyr who suffered a death of violence. There is nothing in the whole history of the Church, not even in the dark ages of the conversion of the northern nations of what is now Christendom, finer than the story told all too modestly by Dr W. A. Elmslie in his book, *Among the Wild Ngoni* (Edinburgh, 1899). Only the supernatural, working through such men and their successors, the late Dr Steele and the present Donald Fraser (of Glasgow) can account for the transformation. When making the Stevenson Road, James Stewart had opened a station at Mwiniwanda on the plateau, and soon after Dr Cross began settlements on the slopes of the Livingstone Range, up from the Songwé. But the time of the partition of Africa had come, from the action of Germany at Zanzibar. The vast country, from the east coast opposite that island of ours, back to the lakes and down to the Rovuma, was declared by treaty to belong to our Teutonic kinsfolk, and the Songwé became the boundary between us and them. Transferring the new stations there to the Moravian Society, who, followed by the Berlin Mission, took possession of the Livingstone Mountains, the Livingstonia Mission made the important port of Karonga its headquarters at the north end of Nyasa.

Now, in 1888, came the climax of the struggle between Christian civilisation and Mohammedan slave-raiding. It had been seen very early that, in the absence of a government and of civilised facilities of any kind, a secular company was required to work parallel with the Livingstonia Mission, supplying lawful commerce to push out the slave-trade. The same merchant-princes of Glasgow who did so much for the Mission formed themselves into the African Lakes Company, now the African Lakes Trading Corporation, with a capital of one hundred and fifty thousand pounds. For years the shareholders took out their dividends in philanthropy alone, but last year they received seven per cent. Resenting the action of the two influences, the spiritual Mission and the commercial company, three leaders of the Arab slave-raiders resolved to extinguish both. Under Mlozi they stockaded themselves over

against Karonga, and stopped the whole progress of the previous thirteen years. The Lakes Company, by its heroic managers, Messrs John and Frederick Moir, bravely set itself to extinguish the enemy and rescue the Kondé and other peoples whom the Arabs were harrying. Colonel (then Captain) Lugard was invited by the British Consul to join the Moirs, save Karonga, and clear the land, which then owned no ruler's authority. How splendidly, yet humanely, this was accomplished, with one gun, Colonel Lugard tells in *The Rise of our East African Empire* (Edinburgh, 1893). The way was now clear for the step which the action of the other Christian Powers had led us to delay too long in taking—the establishment of the Protectorate of British Central Africa.

The Livingstonia Mission—that is, the self-sacrifice and the consecrated genius of David Livingstone, Dr James Stewart, and Dr Robert Laws—had created a great British colony, extended, by North Rhodesia under the South African Company, over an area as vast as the German Empire. As in 1874, the Scotch Churches again united, this time with the English Universities Mission, their friendly neighbour on Lake Nyasa, to ask the British Government to do its duty. Meeting Members of Parliament under Lord Balfour of Burleigh in London on the 24th of April 1888, their representatives, with whom were those of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society and the Anti-Slavery Society, urged three requests: (1) to impress on Government facts as to the increase of the slave-trade in connection with political changes at Zanzibar, (2) to secure free transit for British goods on British vessels from the coast to the interior, and (3) to declare Nyasaland from the Ruo northwards a sphere of British influence. When the Foreign Office saw the report of the enthusiastic meeting next morning, Lord Salisbury atoned for all past delays and dangers by inviting the Mission deputies to meet him. Had not Lord Palmerston's and Lord Clarendon's action in 1858 shown the way? The Zambezi was again officially declared to be 'God's highway' for all nations; and by 1891 British Central Africa, under its own chief commissioner, was a fact.

As a mission to the dark races, that which so worthily bears Livingstone's name may claim, in this the twenty-fifth year of its operations, to be the most thorough and complete in its methods, and the most rapidly and permanently successful in both its direct and its secondary results, of all Christian missions, ancient and modern. The six methods are, for men and women, preaching and teaching, translating and printing, medical and industrial, with the one aim of creating Christian communities and nations. All six are combined by this one organisation with a vigour and a unity seen elsewhere chiefly in separate agencies. Preaching has the direct and immediate aim of conversions, resulting in a self-

governing, a self-supporting, and a self-extending native Church. Here, before the eyes of this generation, the process has been evident and rapid, in a way rarely seen elsewhere. How soon may a new mission be expected to see true and working converts? The question shuts out the old system of mass movements such as brought into Christendom our fathers and consolidated the great Russian Church. On the individualistic system of at least Scotch missions, the early result must be slow, but all the more thorough and certain in the future. In British Central Africa the first Chinyanja convert dates from 1881, six years after Laws began his Bible translation; in 1883 there were nine, of whom two were women; in 1889, forty-eight; in 1894, two hundred and seventy-seven; in 1899, about thirteen hundred. Among the lately bloodthirsty Ngoni around Ekwendeni, as among the once enslaved Atonga around Bandawé, there have of late been scenes of almost national covenant-making and personal consecration such as have not been surpassed in the revival and hillside sacramental seasons of Scotland, but free from all excess and physical manifestations.

Teaching in one hundred and fifteen vernacular and eight Anglo-vernacular schools, attended on a single day this year by twenty-two thousand two hundred and twenty-eight adults and children of both sexes, at once prepares for such results and perpetuates them on a solid foundation. The best of the scholars are drafted into the High School and Training Institution at Livingstonia in the healthy uplands above Florence Bay, some five thousand six hundred feet above the sea. That busy hive of three hundred and fifty resident students of both sexes, with its self-supporting farm under a grandson of Dr Moffat, and factories and press, gives a permanence and expansion unknown in Uganda. No fewer than twelve languages have been mastered, and in these portions of the Bible are translated, and a pure schoolbook literature prepared in the Mission press by native printers under one Scotch foreman. Of the ordained and university missionaries three-fourths are medical

men with a full British qualification, and there are two certificated nurses. These treated eleven thousand seven hundred and fifty-five medical and fifteen thousand four hundred and ninety-four surgical cases in 1898. To the many English Universities missionaries, white employés of the Government, the trading and the coffee companies, and the workmen of the Transcontinental Telegraph Company already on the south shore of Tanganyika, the medical missionaries have been a blessing. The industrial work at each of the five central stations from Bandawé to Mwenzo on the Congo watershed, the very heart of Africa (as the word signifies), is described by a recent traveller from Mashonaland as resembling 'a large industrial centre at home'; a scene of varied activity and order, with its indentured apprentices and its skilled work for both men and women. The Mission has supplied the whole colony and part of North Rhodesia with cheap and clever and polite Christian labourers. By the successive Chief Commissioners, Sir H. Johnston and Mr Sharp, as by representatives of the Chartered Company like Major Forbes, R.A., and Mr Codrington, official testimony has been borne in almost every year's report to the good deeds unconsciously done by the missionaries, and to the widespread loyalty and elevating civilisation in which may be summed up the secondary results of the Scottish Livingstonia Mission. The Scotch staff is now thirty strong, including cultured women, exclusive of the large allied Mission of the Scot-Dutch Murrays south from Bandawé towards the Zambezi.

Government is now expected to do its duty in laying, on the three-foot-six gauge, the railway which Sir Charles Metcalfe surveyed by its orders in 1897 for two hundred miles, from Chiromo, on the Lower Shiré, to Blantyre and Mpimbi round the cataracts, and then from Blantyre to Zomba, the capital, and Lake Nyasa. That will give uninterrupted water and rail communication from Chindé, at the mouth of the Zambezi, to the north end of Lake Tanganyika.

MRS PORTINGDALE'S LUNATIC.

By W. E. CULE.

THERE are some curious people at Bessing-on-Sea, and they entertain peculiar ideas as to what is the safest thing to do in a thunder-storm. My experience of their quaintness in this respect was a very brief one, but my recollections of it are remarkably vivid and distinct.

I went down to Bessing to spend a fortnight's vacation with my Aunt Esther, and the thunder-storm took place on the morning after my somewhat sudden arrival. Immediately after breakfast

the atmosphere became hushed and sullen, while clouds of a heavy bluish complexion gathered overhead. My aunt viewed these omens with manifest uneasiness, natural, I thought, in a nervous old lady. Presently she left me to myself, and I retired to my own room to write a letter or two. This took me about an hour, and the storm was still gathering when I had finished.

The hush which prevailed without seemed to have found its way to the innmost quarters of my aunt's household, for there was not a sound to be heard anywhere. After some trouble I dis-

covered Aunt Esther in the library, seated in an easy-chair with her eyes fast closed. The expression she wore was one of intense pain.

'Good gracious, aunt!' I cried, 'what on earth is the matter?'

She opened her eyes suddenly. 'Dear me, Harold,' she said mildly, 'how you startled me! There is nothing the matter. It is the thunder-storm.'

'The thunder-storm?'

'Yes. I am very nervous about thunder, and I have found that the best thing to do is to try to forget it. I sit down with my eyes closed, and try to concentrate my thoughts upon something else. Indeed, I have found this plan most successful.'

'Really?' I asked. 'And are all your servants doing the same?'

'Yes,' answered the old lady gravely. 'I have ordered them to do so.'

This accounted for the prevailing silence. The cook, the housemaid, and probably the gardener were all sitting down in the kitchen with their eyes closed, trying hard to concentrate their thoughts on anything but the storm. Before I had quite realised this Aunt Esther went on:

'I am not so foolish as some people about thunder. I know one person who refuses to stay in the house at such times, because there are so many steel articles about her. Mine, however, is a good plan, and I give my servants the full benefit of it. I think, Harold'—

In another moment she might have ordered me to follow the general example, so I left the room hastily. I sat down in the hall for a few moments, to enjoy the vision which her words had suggested; then I took my travelling-cap from the stand and went into the garden.

Aunt Esther's garden, which I had not seen for some ten years, was an extensive and old-fashioned one, with wide walks and the privacy secured by high stone walls. On reaching the farther end I found that the house behind me was quite hidden from view by the abundance of foliage. Before me was the wall, covered by peach and pear trees, and against the wall stood a light hand-ladder. The gardener had left it there when he had been called in to concentrate his thoughts upon something else.

I felt an idle curiosity to know what was on the other side of the wall. Probably I should find a field, or perhaps another garden. With cautious steps I began to mount the ladder. I am inquisitive by nature.

Slowly my head rose above the wall. It was a large garden that came into view, with a house half-concealed among the trees. Everything was very still, and there seemed to be nobody about. I raised myself another step, to make a closer scrutiny.

Then I gave a start, and for a moment drew back. It was only for a moment, for then, with

increasing boldness, I was peering down at the scene which had startled me.

Just below, built against the wall, was a kind of rustic summer-house. It was a wooden erection, covered with the ornamental bark so frequently used for flower-boxes. There was no door, but it was open at the end, and within I could see a couple of tall carpet-chairs and a wicker table. On the table lay two books, one of them open, and in one of the chairs sat a lady. The first glance told me that she was fast asleep; the second, that she was young and charming—quite young and decidedly charming!

For some seconds I could only gaze helplessly. She sat leaning back, with her face turned in my direction and a Tam-o'-Shanter cap set daintily upon her head. Her gloveless hands were delightfully white and small.

When I had observed all these points I mounted a step higher!

Let me say here that I am shockingly susceptible and exceedingly romantic. The sound of a girl's voice, the very rustle of her skirts, can always set my pulse in rapid motion, while I am prepared to read the opening of a romance in a simple chance-meeting or in the commonest everyday remark. As a rule I am shy and reserved; but, like some other men of this character, I can occasionally act in an absolutely reckless and dare-devil way. These facts must be taken in explanation of my further conduct.

I gazed upon that picture for another minute. Then I mounted another step. Again I gazed for a space, and then I found myself seated astride the wall. By this time the spirit of adventure was in me, and I was capable of any madness. A thousand foolish and romantic fancies came rushing to my brain. I was already in love!

Who and what the sleeper was, her name, nature, and station—all these had nothing to do with the matter. Happy chance and a providential thunderstorm had led me to the spot. The same thunderstorm, no doubt, had sent her to sleep with the book open before her.

I looked the grounds carefully over, but there was no sign of life. While I was doing this I thought I heard the sleeper stir, but when I glanced quickly down she was as still as ever. With perfect caution I lifted the ladder over, and let it down on the other side. A moment later I was in the entrance to the summer-house.

Save for the breathing of the sleeper, the stillness was almost painful. It occurred to me once to wonder what she would say if she found me there, but I did not trouble to answer the question. I had read of similar cases before, and everything always came out nicely. Of course she would see at once the romance and beauty of the situation. I felt quite sure of this when I saw that the book before her was a volume of Tennyson, open at 'The Coming of Arthur.' My own name is Arthur—Harold Arthur Simpson.

She was absolutely charming. Beneath the rakish cap stray curls of dark, glossy hair wandered down to the graceful little ears and about the ivory temples. The cheeks were rather pale, and the lips were closed just a trifle too firmly for perfect repose; but—but all that only seemed to increase the charm. I did not gaze too earnestly, fearing to disturb her, and presently took up the other book which lay upon the table. It was a morocco-bound autograph album, with the majority of the leaves empty. I turned them silently, to read a number of unfamiliar names and commonplace quotations. While I was doing this a bright idea came to me, full of the spirit of romance. I would write something in the album!

As I searched for my pencil I decided what this something should be. Finding a vacant page, I quickly drew upon it the outline of a heart. Within this I wrote the name 'Arthur.' When she awoke after I had gone she would find this symbol, and know that her prince had been with her. I would leave the book open at that place.

Prince! As I laid the book down another thought flashed to my mind. It made my heart beat madly and sent the hot blood rushing to my cheeks. Here was the Sleeping Beauty—here was the Prince. There was one thing wanting to make the story whole. One thing . . .

Somehow I felt that it would not waken her; otherwise, perhaps, I should not have dared. But her slumber was sound, and I was strung to the highest pitch of reckless excitement. No, it would not waken her. It would be but a touch.

With intense caution I drew nearer. There was no difficulty whatever, for her face was turned towards me. I trembled as I bent down; the fragrance of her breath was in my face; and then. . . . It was just a touch, and nothing more.

But it sent a tremor through her frame, as from a shock. For a breathless moment I stood still behind her chair; and then I saw the madness, the utter folly, of what I had done. I had a vague thought of police, and turned cold with fear.

But she did not wake, and I passed out like a shadow. Some instinct impelled me to close that awful album as I turned away. In another three seconds, it seemed, I had climbed the waiting ladder, drawn it up after me, and placed it in its first position. I was back in Aunt Esther's garden, tremulous with mingled dread and triumph.

'Good heavens!' I said to myself, 'that was the maddest thing a man ever did.'

I walked twice round the garden to quiet my nerves, and then went indoors. With the relief of my sudden panic came the desire to know more about my Sleeping Beauty. The romance had begun well, and now it should move forward. I had some twelve days in which to work it out.

Naturally I had forgotten all about the thunder-storm; but now I found that it had passed over without breaking. The skies were clearer, and my aunt had gone to the kitchen to make arrangements for lunch. As soon as she came back I opened the subject.

'Aunt Esther,' I said, 'whose is the garden next to yours? When I looked over the wall I saw a young lady sitting in a little summer-house, fast asleep.'

'My aunt seemed surprised. 'Asleep?' she said. 'That is very strange. But it must have been Mrs Portingdale.'

'Mrs Portingdale?' I gasped. 'Mrs'—

'Yes,' said Aunt Esther quietly. 'She is the person I was about to tell you of this morning. When there is thunder about she dare not stay in the house, because there are so many steel articles in it. She goes to that ridiculous little summer-house until the storm is over. But she could hardly have gone to sleep there; she would be too nervous.'

I felt a horrible sensation of bewilderment.

'But—but,' I cried helplessly, 'this was quite a young girl. She was not twenty'—

'Mrs Portingdale,' said my aunt, nodding, 'is just twenty. She was married six months ago. There is no other young woman there.'

These measured words struck me with dumbness. Aunt Esther looked at my face with increasing surprise, and seemed just about to ask a question when a noisy interruption took place. The front-door bell was rung with an alarming clang, clang, clang, eloquent of haste and urgency. We heard the housemaid running to the door, and then there was a sound of voices. We listened and waited, my aunt in surprise, myself in growing guilt and fear.

In a moment the housemaid knocked, and entered. 'If you please, ma'am,' she said excitedly, 'Mr Portingdale's compliments, and can you run over to see Mrs Portingdale? She has had a fright in the garden, and fainted!'

My aunt rose in agitation, but she was not the one to delay a kindness for the sake of asking questions.

'Dear me! dear me!' she said in distress. 'It must have been the thunder. Ask the girl to wait, Mary, and I'll go back with her.'

The messenger was taken to the kitchen, to tell her story at greater length, while Aunt Esther hurried upstairs for her bonnet and mantle. Five minutes later she came down again, and left the house with the girl. As soon as she had disappeared I went to find the housemaid.

'Mary,' I said hastily, 'what did the girl tell you? What is wrong with Mrs Portingdale?'

And Mary told me, pleased to find an interested listener. The first part of the story was exactly as I expected to find it. Mrs Portingdale had gone to the summer-house because of the thunder-storm, and had taken a couple of books with her.

The heaviness of the air had given her a headache, and she had closed her eyes for a while to rest them. Presently a slight sound had disturbed her, and, looking up, she had seen a most terrifying sight.

'It was a lunatic, sir,' said Mary, 'sitting on the wall, and looking round the garden so eager and fierce-like, it made the poor lady's blood run cold to see him. She knew at once that he must have escaped from the Bessing Asylum, because he was a strange face, and such things is happening continually. So she shut her eyes fast, knowing as her only chance was to pretend to be asleep. Then he got down off the wall, and came and stared at her for ever so long, she almost dying of fear. It must have been awful! Then she peeped again between her eyelashes, and there was the madman grinning, silly-like, over her books. After that he was still so long that she expected every second that he would spring at her, but he didn't. What do you think he did, sir?'

'Who knows?' I gasped, falsely and painfully.

'Well, sir, he—kissed her!' Mary blushed at that point, even in her excitement. 'Fancy being kissed by a lunatic! It sent cold shivers all through the poor lady, and indeed it must have been a horrible feeling, but she didn't stir a finger. Then there was quiet so long that she made bold to peep again, and, lo and behold, he was clean gone! Then she fainted right away, and didn't come to until her husband found her; and after she had told them all about it she had another faint. So Mr Portingdale sent round for our mistress to go there at once. And that's all I know about it, sir.'

It was quite sufficient. I dismissed Mary, and sat down in a state of mind which it is impossible to describe. A married woman! I pondered it hastily. I had been a lunatic indeed! Perhaps at that very moment the poor lady was giving a full and accurate description of my person to an inspector of police and to my appalled Aunt Esther!

I sprang from the chair and rushed to my room. I have packed quickly on various occasions, but never so quickly as I did this time. An omnibus passed the door once in every half-hour, and I watched from my window for its appearance at the head of the road. When it came in sight I ran downstairs with my bag in my hand.

Mary was the only one to see me go. I left her with a confused impression that an urgent telegram had come for me, and that a strike had taken place in my department at the General Post-Office. Before she could utter a question I had passed the outer gates and hailed the omnibus. Twenty minutes later I was at the railway station.

As I have already said, there are people at

Bessing-on-Sea who have curious ideas as to what is the best thing to do in a thunderstorm. It is to their quaintness in this respect that I owe the vivid and painful experience related above.

I had not the courage to write to my aunt, but in a few days received a note from her. The affair had not developed to any great extent after all. As no patient had escaped from the local asylum, and as Mrs Portingdale had only very vague ideas as to the stranger's appearance, people soon began to believe that she had fallen asleep in the summer-house, and that her constant dread of lunatics had produced a kind of nightmare. In a few days she was persuaded to adopt the same impression herself. Curiously enough, Aunt Esther was able to set her last doubt at rest by second-hand evidence. Her dear nephew Harold, from London, who had only arrived the previous evening, and who had been called back to town almost immediately, had been walking in the garden that morning, and had chanced to look over the boundary wall. There he had seen Mrs Portingdale fast asleep, and probably at that very moment in the throes of her awful dream.

My aunt closed her letter with the hope that the strike—which she would read up in the daily paper as soon as she could find the place—would soon be over, so that I might run down again to complete my holiday.

I have no intention of going. Though I may object to being called a Nightmare, I cannot help seeing that Mrs Portingdale's last impression of her adventure is a very satisfactory one. She may revise it when she comes to examine her album; but in the meantime I have no wish to disturb it by introducing her to the Lunatic in person.

H O W L O N G ?

OUT of the south is the chill wind blowing,
Straight from the white world of ice and snow;
And over the wild sea my thoughts are going
To a far country where roses glow.
For, dear, unto thee, when the clouds are flying
Like war-torn banners the skies along,
In mournful measure my heart is crying—
'Oh, my beloved! How long? how long?'

Low overhead are the dark mists trailing,
And hiding the mountains from longing eyes;
And, far beyond them, the ships are sailing
To thy fair home-land—Love's paradise!
But here the skylark has ceased his singing,
And dropped to his nest with a broken song,
And ever to thee is my wild cry winging—
'Love of my heart! How long? how long?'

CLARA SINGER POYNTER.

OTAGO, NEW ZEALAND.